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SECRET EXCISE

March 23, 1961 - Thursday

Blair Clark called on me this morning. He says his new position in CBS is interesting, but the problems confronting him are even more complicated than he had anticipated. He said CBS had been powerless to stop the sale of Ed Murrow's television show on migrant agriculture labor in the U.S., since the company made such material freely available to all purchasers. Ed telephoned the head of the BBC in London and asked him to cancel the showing. This was ineffective, and there seems to be quite a storm over the incident in Congress. Ed did not request CBS to take action in the matter.

The Third Air Force and the 7th Air Division gave us a 1-1/2 hour briefing this morning on their operations in the U.K. It was enthralling.

I went to see the Prime Minister at Admiralty House before lunch. He is attractive, deliberate in his speech, and seems to have a considerable degree of personal charm. His appearance is somewhat Edwardian. He walks slowly and as if thoroughly fatigued.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 2 OCT 98
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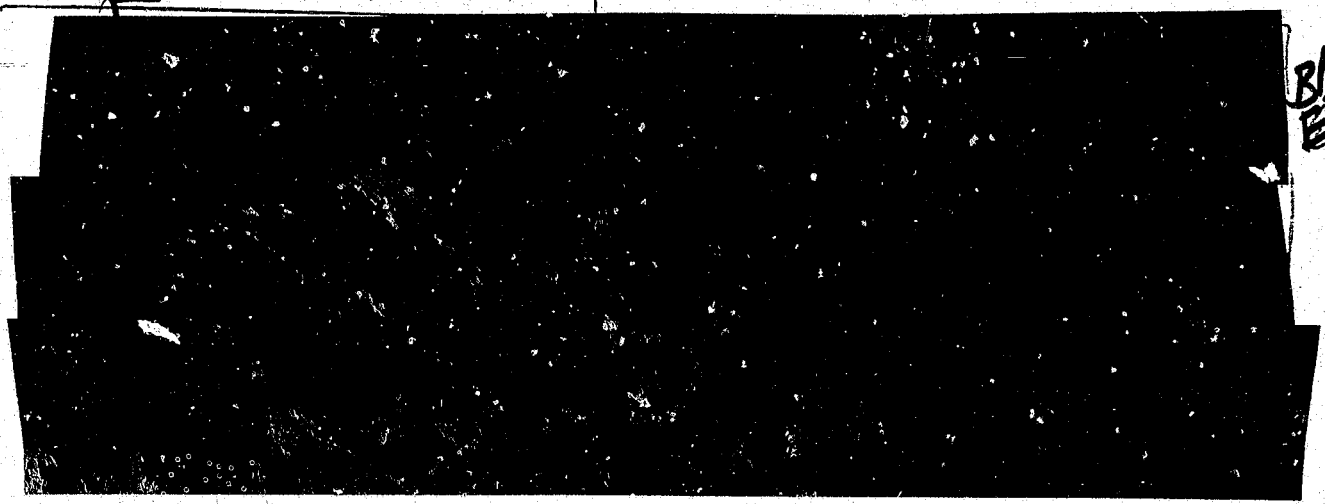

Frank Wisner has been feeding me today various intelligence reports on this subject. The Communists are still making progress militarily, and the situation of the Royal Army continues to deteriorate. Its troops seem to have no stomach for fighting.

I had a lunch for about 18 of the Air Force officers who attended the meeting this morning. This was given in our Chancery dining room and was done in fine style.

John Duncan, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, came in this afternoon and discussed his recent visits to Rome and Cairo. Later on, officers of the American organizations in London met me, and I agreed to assume the offices in their societies traditionally held by the American Ambassador. Don Smith, our Consul General, is the Embassy's liaison with these [redacted] organizations. The gentlemen who called on me were:

Hubert B. Chappell, Vice President, Central Hanover Bank and Trust Company and President of the American Chamber of Commerce -

J. E. Currie, Managing Director, Stevenson, Jordan & Harrison Ltd., and Chairman of the American Society in London -

Thomas R. Keating, Managing Director, Knox Laboratories, Ltd., and President of the American Club -

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 2 Mar 80
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

of their colleagues to lunch with me next month after my return from Washington.

Sir William Haley, editor of THE TIMES, lunched with me alone at the residence. Most of his career has been spent in journalism. He was formerly joint managing director of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN and EVENING NEWS, Ltd., and editor of the MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS. He has also been a director of Reuters. He was editor-in-chief of the BBC from 1943-44 and its director-general from 1944-52. Since 1952, he has been editor of THE TIMES. I have met him in various countries, and have always found his advice friendly and helpful as it was again on this occasion.

With a letter of introduction from my brother Jim, Miss Gertrude Weiner, enroute to Israel, Istanbul and points east, called on me. She is one of the "Seraphic Secretaries" who form a formidable group in New York. They are all employed by large corporations and have important responsibilities.

At his invitation, I went to see the Canadian High Commissioner, George Drew, in his excellent offices on Trafalgar Square. He and his Political Section occupy a building that was once the Union Club. Drew has had an active life in politics, law and the Army. I spent 1-1/2 hours with him; his fluent conversation ranged over many subjects.

I was particularly interested in his comments on the recent Commonwealth meeting.

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